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IAEA.org

## **Nuclear Trafficking Remains Global Priority**

**International Effort Must Continue, Delegates At IAEA-Organized Event Conclude**

**Staff Report**

**7 December 2007**

The illicit trafficking of nuclear material and the potential threat it poses continues to be an issue of international concern, while steps to establish effective technical and administrative systems to prevent the uncontrolled and unauthorised movement of nuclear and other radioactive materials must continue to be taken, delegates from 60 countries agreed at an IAEA-organized international conference in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The *Illicit Nuclear Trafficking: Collective Experience and the Way Forward* conference attendees also acknowledged the IAEA's Illicit Trafficking Database (ITDB) to be a critical tool against nuclear trafficking,

providing valuable information on "weaknesses and vulnerabilities" which may be exploited to acquire such material. Since it was established 12 years ago the database has recorded 1,266 incidents. In the conference findings it was reported that halting the illicit movement of nuclear material, equipment and technologies that terrorists could use continues to be a global priority. A system that addresses both detection and prevention is essential, the conference attendees agreed. "Since the human, political and economic consequences of a successful malicious act involving nuclear or other radioactive materials could be far-reaching, the limited knowledge of direct attempts to acquire such material is no cause for comfort," said conference President Peter Jenkins.

The conference findings also stressed that international cooperation is essential to better understand the circumstances of trafficking events, patterns and trends, while continued effort is required to strengthen the compilation of information in systems such as the ITDB.

Although many states are benefiting from "dramatic improvements" - better equipped to combat illicit trafficking, supported by new international legal agreements, improvements in detection tools and techniques allowing material to be traced to its origin - significant disparities remain between the capabilities of some countries.

Recommendations made by the conference include the following:

- Continue the development of new technologies for hard-to-detect fissile materials;
- Share new technologies with states that lack them;
- Take into account unguarded borders in the need to increase the sophistication of detection capabilities;
- Formulate effective communication strategies to inform the public; and
- Have the IAEA convene a further conference about illicit trafficking in 2010 to assess progress.

About 300 delegates from 60 states and 11 international organizations attended the *Illicit Nuclear Trafficking: Collective Experience and the Way Forward* conference from 19-22 November. The four-day event, which was hosted by the government of Great Britain, was called to take stock of global efforts to combat illicit nuclear trafficking and to consider future steps.

<http://www.iaea.or.at/NewsCenter/News/2007/nuciltrafficking.html>

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Los Angeles Times

December 8, 2007

## **Gates Takes Hard Line On Iran**

***Defense secretary tells Middle Eastern leaders that Tehran has the capacity to quickly restart nuclear program.***

By Peter Spiegel, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

MANAMA, BAHRAIN — Despite U.S. intelligence findings that Iran halted its nuclear weapons program four years ago, the Bush administration stepped up its efforts to portray Tehran as a threat, with Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates insisting that the program could be restarted at any time.

Gates told a gathering of Middle East leaders here today that the Iranian government remained a source of "instability and chaos" that was still hiding its nuclear ambitions from the international community.

Iranian leaders have seized on the U.S. National Intelligence Estimate released Monday, saying it is proof that Tehran's nuclear program is intended only for peaceful purposes and should undercut Washington's push for additional sanctions.

But Gates, long viewed as one of the administration's more restrained voices on Iran policy, called such assertions "a watershed," saying that if Iran was suddenly embracing U.S. intelligence findings, it was tacitly agreeing to the estimate's other conclusions -- such as Iranian support for regional terrorist groups and its ambitions to develop ballistic missiles that threaten its neighbors.

"In reality, you cannot pick and choose only the conclusions you like of this National Intelligence Estimate," Gates said in the conference's opening address. "The report expresses with greater confidence than ever that Iran did have a nuclear weapons program -- developed secretly, kept hidden for years, and in violation of its international obligations."

Gates' comments were notable not only for their contents -- which made a direct appeal to Shiite Iran's Sunni-led rivals in the region to unite against Tehran's ambitions -- but also for the setting in which they were delivered and the man who delivered them.

Several of Iran's most senior officials had been scheduled to attend the conference, an annual gathering sponsored by the London-based International Institute of Strategic Studies, but skipped it at the last minute, without explanation.

In his first year in office, Gates has shown a reluctance to lecture U.S. adversaries in public and has been more dispassionate on Iran than his White House counterparts. But in his speech, the secretary showed none of his earlier

restraint, noting the nuclear weapons program that reportedly ran until 2003 and the continuation of uranium enrichment.

The strong words illustrated how concerned the administration has become that the intelligence finding could halt any momentum it had in the United Nations to push through another round of sanctions. Although U.N. Security Council members France and Britain continue to view Tehran with mistrust, Washington was struggling to win over Russia and China even before the NIE report.

Gates called on the international community to not abandon efforts to tighten sanctions, saying only global measures could prevent Iran from restarting its weapons program.

"The United States and the international community must continue -- and intensify -- our economic, financial, and diplomatic pressures on Iran to suspend enrichment and agree to verifiable arrangements that can prevent that country from resuming its nuclear weapons program at a moment's notice -- at the whim of its most militant leaders," Gates said. "That should be a matter of grave concern to every government in the world."

Notably, however, Gates did not discuss possible military action against Iran. Over the last year, it has become routine for administration officials to say that military action always remained an option, even as the White House continued to focus on the diplomatic route.

Gates made no such declaration in his speech, but at the Pentagon, Marine Gen. John F. Sattler, director of strategic plans for the Joint Staff, said Friday that the NIE had not prompted the Pentagon to change any plans.

"I can state that there has been no course correction, slowdown, speed-up, given to us inside the Joint Staff based on the NIE," Sattler said.

Although Gates said Iran continued to train and support anti-American militias in Iraq and had deployed "lethal weapons" to Iraq and Afghanistan, military leaders say that the flow of weapons from Iran to Iraq may be slowing, possibly as a result of an agreement between those two countries.

Attacks using what the military believes are Iranian-made weapons have not stopped. Army Gen. Carter F. Ham, Joint Staff director for operations, said at a Pentagon news conference that weapons caches containing Iranian munitions are still being found.

"There certainly are other indicators that weapons, munitions and training are still being provided by Iran," Ham said. "So I would say, I think the jury is still out."

The reason for the uncertainty, Sattler said, was because the U.S. did not know when the weapons were smuggled.

"We can't tell what may have moved in and was stockpiled, what may have been done before the declaration was made," Sattler said.

*Times staff writer Julian E. Barnes in Washington contributed to this report.*

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-gates8dec08.1.4822420.story>

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Washingtonpost.com

December 8, 2007

## **Gates Says Iran Still A Threat**

By Kristin Roberts, Reuters

MANAMA--Iran poses a threat to the United States and the Middle East despite a U.S. intelligence assessment that Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program in 2003, Defence Secretary Robert Gates said on Saturday.

In a speech to the Manama Dialogue security conference in Bahrain, the Pentagon chief argued Iran still has the capability to restart its weapons program and continues to enrich uranium, an essential part of atomic weapons development.

He also accused Iran of actively supporting insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as Islamist groups Hezbollah and Hamas, and that its missile program poses a wider threat throughout the region.

"Everywhere you turn, it is the policy of Iran to foment instability and chaos, no matter the strategic value or cost in the blood of innocents -- Christians, Jews and Muslims alike," Gates said.

"There can be little doubt that their destabilizing foreign policies are a threat to the interests of the United States, to the interests of every country in the Middle East and to the interests of all countries within the range of the ballistic missiles Iran is developing."

Gates also argued that the recent National Intelligence Estimate on Iran's nuclear program did not rule out Tehran restarting its pursuit of atomic weapons. Iran says its nuclear program has only peaceful civilian aims.

"The Estimate is explicit that Iran is keeping its options open and could re-start its nuclear weapons program at any time -- I would add, if it has not done so already," the former CIA director told the conference.

"Although the Estimate does not say so, there are no impediments to Iran's re-starting its nuclear weapons program - none, that is, but the international community."

Gates urged Iran's neighbors to cooperate more closely in their defence activities to counter Tehran's policies and specifically consider a joint early warning system to detect missile launches. That, he said, could deter Iran from pursuing development of such weapons.

Iran cancelled its appearance at the conference.

Gates' comments follow a visit to U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, where commanders told him Iran continues to provide support to insurgents.

Iran denies U.S. charges that it has armed, trained and funded Shi'ite militias in Iraq, blaming the violence in Iraq on the U.S.-led invasion to topple Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Gates's remarks also come as the military assesses Iran's ability to disrupt oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, a transit route for around 40 percent of all globally traded oil.

Iran has suggested that its Islamic militia forces would be capable of disrupting strategic Gulf oil shipping routes if it was attacked by the United States.

On Iraq, Gates called progress in the security arena real but fragile. He urged Iraq's neighbors to support the Baghdad government.

"There may be some who, because of past resentments and disagreements, might be cheering for failure. I would respectfully suggest that these sentiments are dangerously shortsighted and self-destructive," Gates said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/12/07/AR2007120700969.html>

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Yahoo.com

December 8, 2007

## **Gates Warns Of Iran Threat To US And Mideast**

MANAMA (AFP) - US Defence Secretary Robert Gates on Saturday said Iran's foreign policy was a threat to the United States, the Middle East and all countries within range of missiles Tehran is developing.

"There can be little doubt that their destabilising foreign policies are a threat to the interests of the United States, to the interests of every country in the Middle East, and to the interests of all countries within the range of the ballistic missiles Iran is developing," Gates told a conference on regional security in Bahrain.

Iran is also "funding and training" militias in Iraq, supporting "terrorist organisations" such as Hezbollah and Hamas and developing "medium-range ballistic missiles that are not particularly cost-effective unless equipped with warheads carrying weapons of mass destruction," Gates added.

His accusations came five days after the publication of the US National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), which said that Iran halted a secret nuclear weapons programme four years ago -- a conclusion at odds with Washington's stance of recent years.

Suspicious about Iran's controversial nuclear activities have been a key driver of the tough US approach towards Iran and its pursuit of sanctions against the Islamic republic.

"The United States and the international community must continue -- and intensify -- our economic, financial and diplomatic pressures in Iran," Gates said, adding the US was seeking to forge more ways of applying pressure on Tehran.

In a wide-ranging speech Gates also urged delegates to the conference to support efforts to stabilise war-torn Iraq.

"I urge you to exercise your influence with the Iraqis and encourage them to meet their own goals and expectations," he said.

"I also urge you to help them in every way that you can by dampening home-grown insurgencies, by alleviating sectarian strife and by providing economic and diplomatic support," he added, warning that fallout from failure in Iraq would be felt first in the capitals of the Middle East.

The event in the Gulf archipelago -- home to the US Fifth Fleet -- brings together more than 200 ministers, security officials and anti-terrorism experts from around 50 countries.

[http://www.spacewar.com/reports/Gates\\_warns\\_of\\_Iran\\_threat\\_to\\_US\\_and\\_Mideast\\_999.html](http://www.spacewar.com/reports/Gates_warns_of_Iran_threat_to_US_and_Mideast_999.html)

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Philadelphia Inquirer

December 8, 2007

## **Nuclear Envoy: N. Korea On Task**

TOKYO - The top U.S. nuclear envoy for North Korea said that disablement of the communist nation's atomic program was on schedule and that the removal of reactor fuel from its key facility would soon be under way.

Christopher Hill, who delivered a personal letter from President Bush to North Korean leader Kim Jong Il during a visit this week in Pyongyang, also urged the North to provide a "complete and correct" disclosure of its nuclear programs.

"As important as the declaration is, it's also important to understand that actual work is on the ground in Yongbyon and is proceeding very much on schedule," Hill said during a stop in Japan following a three-day visit to inspect the main nuclear facility in Yongbyon.

--AP

[http://www.philly.com/inquirer/world\\_us/12274866.html](http://www.philly.com/inquirer/world_us/12274866.html)

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Washington Times

December 8, 2007

Pg. 1

## Agency Defends Estimate On Iran

By Jon Ward, Washington Times

The federal agency responsible for national intelligence estimates yesterday defended its report on Iran against charges that it was crafted primarily by former State Department officials who infused their personal politics into the report to undercut the Bush administration.

"It's not as if there are two or three people who craft this and then it's just put out there," said Vanee Vines, spokeswoman for the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI).

The response came after The Washington Times reported yesterday that the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) was heavily influenced by three former State Department officials who dislike President Bush and have in the past opposed and obstructed efforts to sanction foreign governments and companies involved in weapons trafficking. Sen. John Ensign, Nevada Republican, thinks the report was "politicized" and plans to introduce a bill next week that would create a bipartisan commission to investigate the NIE's accuracy.

Ms. Vines defended the report, saying that each NIE is a "group exercise" involving the "entire intelligence community."

However, another DNI spokesman said earlier this week that two individuals in particular played a significant role in drafting the report.

"Many analysts worked this issue, but Tom Fingar, our deputy director of national intelligence of analysis, and Vann Van Diepen, national intelligence officer for WMD and proliferation, had a major part in it," spokesman Ross Feinstein said in an e-mail.

A third DNI official, Kenneth C. Brill, also was reported to be a chief contributor.

Ms. Vines insisted, however, that "to try to characterize these estimates as the product of one or two individuals is just entirely inaccurate."

She pointed out that a NIE is compiled using intelligence from the CIA and the other 17 U.S. intelligence agencies, and then reviewed by the National Intelligence Board, whose chairman is Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell.

The NIE released this week said Iran once had a covert nuclear-weapons program, but shut it down in 2003. That conclusion reversed a finding from 2005 that Iran was working full speed toward making a weapon.

The White House yesterday said it stands "by the work of the intelligence community."

Mr. Ensign said his bill would create a panel of three Democrats and three Republicans, who would recruit policy analysts to examine the accuracy of the report.

"Let's make sure this new report is right," Ensign spokesman Tory Mazzola said.

He said Mr. Ensign's proposal is supported by "a small group of bipartisan senators," including Sen. Jeff Sessions, Alabama Republican, and is motivated by a conviction that intelligence reports such as the NIE are "becoming very politicized."

Several current and former government officials who worked with Mr. Fingar, Mr. Van Diepen and Mr. Brill said the three men consistently obstructed and opposed efforts to impose sanctions on rogue nations by John R. Bolton when he was undersecretary of state for arms control during Mr. Bush's first term.

None of the three report contributors accepted multiple offers to be interviewed.

The Pentagon, meanwhile, said yesterday the NIE has had no impact on its planning.

"There has been no course correction, slowdown, speedup given to us inside the Joint Staff based on the NIE," said Marine Corps Lt. Gen. John Sattler, director for strategic plans and policy on the U.S. military's Joint Staff, according to Reuters news agency.



Many authorities note that despite the news Iran may have frozen a weapons program in 2003, the NIE reports only "moderate confidence" that Persian state has not restarted the covert program. In addition, Iran is still enriching uranium in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, and the NIE acknowledges that Iran's capability of building a nuclear bomb has not changed substantively from the 2005 report. Iran could have a nuclear weapon as early as 2009, the report said, but more likely will not be able to build one until around 2013.

Only 18 percent of 800 likely voters polled by Rasmussen Reports think Iran ceased its nuclear weapons program, the polling firm announced yesterday.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20071208/NATION/112080051/1002>

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Washington Post  
December 8, 2007  
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## Diving Deep, Unearthing A Surprise

### *How a Search for Iran's Nuclear Arms Program Turned Up an Unexpected Conclusion*

By Peter Baker and Dafna Linzer, Washington Post Staff Writers

They call them "deep dives," special briefings for President Bush to meet with not just his advisers but also the analysts who study Iran in the bowels of the intelligence world. Starting last year, aides arranged a series of sessions for Bush to "get his hands dirty," in the White House vernacular for digging into intelligence to understand what is known and not known.

Preparing for what might be the defining foreign policy challenge of his final years in office, Bush was struck by the limited intelligence on Tehran's nuclear program and pressed for more, said officials familiar with the sessions. But if Bush hoped for solid evidence that Iran was trying to build nuclear bombs, what came back proved more surprising -- Iran did have a nuclear weapons program but shut it down four years ago.

The new report on Iran released this week underscored the fluid nature of U.S. intelligence and its uncomfortable marriage with the nation's foreign policy. Five years after the botched assessment of Iraq's weapons programs, the new information posed profound challenges to the Bush administration: How could officials be sure it was right this time? What would it mean for Bush's policy of international confrontation with Tehran? And should it be revealed to Congress, U.S. allies and the public at large?

While deeply sensitive to any suggestion of improperly influencing intelligence, White House officials were initially skeptical of the new data. "You want to make sure it's not disinformation," Bush said at a news conference. The intelligence agencies created a special "red team" of analysts who set out to determine whether the information could be fake. They concluded it was not.

As they digested the new findings, Bush and his aides chose to focus on the part that confirmed their suspicions -- that Iran previously had a secret weapons program and might still restart it. In their discussions at the White House, officials said, no one suggested Bush tone down his public rhetoric or change his policy.

Still, they understood the sensitivity of the new conclusions. At first, Mike McConnell, the director of national intelligence, decided to keep the new findings secret, but reluctantly reversed course in a flurry of discussions last weekend out of fear of leaks and charges of a coverup, officials said. At that point, only the Israelis had gotten a heads-up. Congress, European allies and the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency were not given full briefings about the report until hours before it was released.

That irritated European allies. "The administration is going to pay a price for not allowing allies in on it at an earlier date," said Robert J. Einhorn, a former State Department nonproliferation official. "The French had carried the administration's water on this issue and really went out on a limb to get the European Union to adopt tough sanctions. And now the rug has been pulled out from under them."

The origin of the latest intelligence can be traced to the summer of 2004, when an Iranian man turned up in Turkey with a laptop computer and the phone number of a German intelligence officer. He called the number, and within 24 hours, analysts at CIA headquarters in Langley were poring over thousands of pages of drawings and information stored on the computer indicating that Iran had been trying to retrofit its longest-range missile, the Shahab III, to carry a nuclear payload. It was designated Project 1-11 and seemed to confirm a nuclear weapons program.

The information retrieved from the laptop formed the backbone of a National Intelligence Estimate issued in 2005 that declared "with high confidence" that Iran was working to build a bomb. Armed with that, the Bush administration spent the past two years pressing European allies, Russia and China to sanction Iran if it did not give up its uranium enrichment program, despite Tehran's insistence that it was only for civilian energy.

With tension rising, Congress asked last year for a new NIE. Bush was pushing for more information as well during his deep-dive sessions. "We've got to get more information on Iran so we know what they're up to," one official paraphrased Bush saying.

As analysts scrambled to finish by April, they were reaching the conclusion that Iran was still a decade away from nuclear weapons, senior intelligence and administration officials said. For three years, the intelligence community had not obtained new information on Project 1-11, vexing administration officials who worried that a cold trail would lead to doubts about the reliability of the laptop's information. "They just wouldn't budge," complained one such official, who declined to be identified to speak candidly.

By June, analysts had an almost complete draft of a new NIE, and it provoked a sharp debate. "The less data you have, the more you argue," said a source familiar with the discussions. Some officials pressed the CIA's Iran desk to follow up on Project 1-11. CIA Director Michael V. Hayden and National Security Agency Director Keith B. Alexander responded by directing vast manpower and technology toward spying on Iranians who may have been involved in the warhead effort.

With Bush pressing for more information, the intelligence community finally came up with something new -- a series of communications intercepts, including snippets of conversations between key Iranian officials, one of them a military officer whose name appeared on the laptop. Two sources said the Iranians complained that the nuclear weapons program had been shuttered four years earlier and argued about whether it would ever be restarted. There had been clues for those willing to see them. For one thing, the laptop contained no new drawings on its hard drive after February 2003, said officials familiar with it. And during a dinner in Tehran with visiting American experts in 2005, Iranian leaders Hashemi Rafsanjani and Hassan Rowhani flatly declared that the country's nuclear weapons research had been halted because Iran felt it did not need the actual bombs, only the ability to show the world it could.

"Look, as long as we can enrich uranium and master the [nuclear] fuel cycle, we don't need anything else," Rafsanjani said at the dinner, according to George Perkovich of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "Our neighbors will be able to draw the proper conclusions."

The evolving NIE bore the imprint of McConnell and his deputies, Thomas Fingar and Donald M. Kerr, friends with decades of national security experience. Fingar in 2005 began changing how information was gathered, filtered and analyzed, and McConnell formalized the new rules after becoming director of national intelligence in February. "He quickly got the mantra down: 'We must make a clear distinction between what we know and don't know and what we judge to be the case,' " said an official present at the time.

As a result, the internal debate over the meaning of the new Iran intelligence was intense and often contentious, with different agencies and individuals clashing over everything from the fine points to the broad conclusions, participants said.

McConnell told Bush about the new information in August during a daily intelligence briefing, but did not provide much detail or anything on paper, White House officials said. Bush periodically asked McConnell for updates. "The president and his advisers were regularly and continuously appraised on new information as we acquired it," an intelligence official said.

Officials also informed House intelligence committee members and key Senate intelligence committee staff members in September, although they were circumspect. "They said, 'We've got new information. We want to make sure we get this thing as close to right as possible,' " said Rep. Peter Hoekstra (Mich.), the House panel's senior Republican.

One intelligence official said Bush's team expressed concern that the intercepts might be disinformation, so analysts tested that thesis. "They tried to figure out what exactly it would take to perpetrate that kind of deception, how many people would be involved, how they would go about doing it, when it would have been set up and so forth," the official said. Analysts "scrubbed and rescrubbed" more than 1,000 pieces of evidence but concluded Iran's program really had been shut down.

A new draft NIE was prepared in September that was radically different from the June version. As part of the testing process, Hayden and his deputy, Stephen Kappes, convened a murder board of sorts, grilling analysts about their data and conclusions. They "had them in a room and it was kind of 'show me,' " one official said. "And they were a skeptical audience." A similar session was conducted in front of Fingar in late October or early November.

By mid-November, the agencies were ready to deliver their conclusions to the White House. Intelligence officials gave a preliminary briefing Nov. 15 in the Situation Room to Vice President Cheney, national security adviser Stephen J. Hadley and other senior officials.

The process was climaxing just as Bush was convening a Middle East peace conference in Annapolis, a meeting designed at least in part to rally the region against Iran. No one told participants about the new information, but on the same day they were gathering in Annapolis on Nov. 27, the National Intelligence Board met to finalize the new NIE. McConnell and others briefed Bush and Cheney the next day. Even though intelligence officials planned to

keep it from the public, Bush later that day passed it on to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Cheney told Defense Minister Ehud Barak.

By last weekend, an intense discussion broke out about whether to keep it secret. "We knew it would leak, so honesty required that we get this out ahead, to prevent it from appearing to be cherry picking," said a top intelligence official. So McConnell reversed himself, and analysts scrambled over the weekend to draft a declassified version. On Monday, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called counterparts in Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China, which have been negotiating a new set of sanctions against Iran. Foreign officials grouched about how it was handled. Had they known before the summit, a senior Israeli official said, "I'm not sure we would have shown up." Among those Kerr called that morning was Hoekstra. He was exasperated at the turnaround and not at all persuaded. To him, it was another example of the tenuous nature of intelligence. "This is not about I don't like the conclusion," he said. "We didn't know enough in 2005, and we don't know enough today."

*Staff writers Walter Pincus, Joby Warrick and Robin Wright contributed to this report.*

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/12/07/AR2007120702418.html>

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Washington Times

December 9, 2007

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## **Gates: Tehran Foments 'Chaos'**

By Lolita C. Baldor, Associated Press

MANAMA, Bahrain--Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates lashed out at Iran yesterday for seeking to cause chaos "everywhere you turn," regardless of the blood spilled, and said Iran's neighbors must demand that Tehran renounce any intention of pursuing nuclear weapons.

At the same time, Mr. Gates endorsed the idea of setting up an independent consortium that, under controlled circumstances, would give countries access to uranium enrichment for civil or development purposes. That process can produce fuel for a nuclear reactor or weapon.

"We ought to be thinking creatively about how the international community could provide such a thing," Mr. Gates said at a global-security conference marked by the abrupt pullout of Iranian officials.

Mr. Gates appealed to Persian Gulf nations to support penalties designed to force Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment. Those nations, he said, also should demand that Iran "openly affirm that it does not intend to develop nuclear weapons in the future."

Iran says its program is aimed at using nuclear reactors to generate electricity. Tehran has rebuffed U.S. demands that it cease enrichment, saying it has a right to do so under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Mr. Gates said Gulf countries must pressure Iran to come clean about its nuclear activities. He said Iran delivers arms to terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan, continues to develop long-range missiles that could carry weapons of mass destruction, and supports Hezbollah, Hamas and other militant Islamist organizations.

Members of the audience challenged his rebukes of Tehran, evidence of the divide among Arab nations over the Bush administration's tough stance. Asked if the U.S. would be willing to talk with Iran, Mr. Gates said the behavior of Iran's current leadership "has not given one confidence that a dialogue would be productive."

"Everywhere you turn, it is the policy of Iran to foment instability and chaos, no matter the strategic value or cost in the blood of innocents — Christians, Jews and Muslims alike," Mr. Gates said in his address at the event organized by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies.

"There can be little doubt that their destabilizing foreign policies are a threat to the interests of the United States, to the interests of every country in the Middle East, and to the interests of all countries within the range of the ballistic missiles Iran is developing," he said.

Several delegates said Washington was hypocritical for supporting Israeli nuclear weapons, and questioned Washington's refusal to meet with Iran to discuss the Islamic state's nuclear activities.

"Not considering Israel a threat to security in the region is considered a biased policy that is based on a double standard," said Abdul-Rahman al-Attiyah, the secretary-general of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council.

Asked whether he thought Israel's nuclear program posed a threat to the region, Mr. Gates replied: "No, I do not." The statement was greeted by laughter, Reuters news agency reported.

A U.S. intelligence estimate released this past week concluded that Iran had stopped atomic-weapons development in 2003. That was in stark contrast to a 2005 estimate that said Tehran was continuing its weapons development.

The principal deputy director of national intelligence released an unsolicited statement yesterday defending the latest assessment. "The task of the intelligence community is to produce objective, ground-truth analysis. We feel confident in our tradecraft and resulting analysis in this estimate," Donald M. Kerr said.



Iran's president hailed the new finding as a "declaration of victory" for his country. Yesterday, Tehran said it has protested to Washington over its "spying" on the country's nuclear activities. The official Islamic Republic News Agency quoted Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki as saying the protest letter was sent through the Swiss Embassy in Tehran, which handles U.S. interests in the country, shortly after the U.S. intelligence report was published Monday.

President Bush said last week the latest conclusion would not lead him to discard the possibility of pre-emptive military action against Iran. His administration has acknowledged that the report may make it harder to build international support to persuade Iran to give up its enrichment program.

Mr. Gates said in Bahrain the analysis "has annoyed a number of our good friends, it has confused a lot of people around the world in terms of what we are trying to accomplish."

Mr. Gates ended his speech with a grim warning against underestimating the U.S.

Some countries, he said, "may believe our resolve has been corroded by the challenges we face at home and abroad."

"This would be a grave misconception," he said.

Nazi Germany, imperial Japan, Fascist Italy and the former Soviet Union all made that miscalculation, Mr. Gates said. "All paid the price. All are on the ash heap of history."

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20071209/FOREIGN/112090040/1003/foreign>

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Washington Post

December 9, 2007

Pg. 27

## **Iran Aims 'To Foment Instability,' Gates Says**

*Nuclear Program Could Be Restarted, Defense Chief Warns*

By Ann Scott Tyson, Washington Post Staff Writer

MANAMA, Bahrain, Dec. 8 -- Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates argued forcefully at a Persian Gulf security conference Saturday that U.S. intelligence indicates Iran could restart its secret nuclear weapons program "at any time" and remains a major threat to the region.

Tough and at times sarcastic, Gates said the Iranian government also is supplying weapons to insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan, backing the radical Islamic movements Hezbollah and Hamas, and developing medium-range ballistic missiles.

"Everywhere you turn, it is the policy of Iran to foment instability and chaos, no matter the strategic value or cost in the blood of innocents," Gates said in a speech to defense leaders from 23 countries attending the Manama Dialogue, a security conference organized by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies.

Gates acknowledged that the recent release of a U.S. National Intelligence Estimate on Iran, which determined that the country halted its secret nuclear weapons program in 2003, was awkward and frustrating for the Bush administration. He explained that the CIA director decides on the content and release, without influence from Congress or the executive branch.

"The estimate clearly has come at an awkward time. It has annoyed a number of our friends. It has confused our allies around the world in terms of what we're trying to accomplish," he said.

International pressure is the only impediment to Iran restarting its nuclear weapons program, Gates said. "Iran is keeping its options open and could restart its nuclear weapons program at any time -- I would add, if it has not done so already."

Gates urged countries around the world to demand that Iran "come clean" about its past nuclear weapons development and insist that it suspend uranium enrichment, pledge not to develop nuclear weapons in the future and agree to inspections. Until it takes those steps, he suggested, engaging Iran in talks would not be productive.

Iran maintains that its nuclear program is for peaceful energy purposes.

At one point, Gates, a former head of the CIA, spoke mockingly of the Iranian government's agreement with the intelligence report.

"Astonishingly, the revolutionary government of Iran has this week, for the first time, embraced as valid an assessment of the United States intelligence community," Gates said. "I assume that it also will embrace as valid" U.S. intelligence showing Iran is training militias in Iraq, backing terrorist organizations and carrying out other hostile acts, he said.

Iranian officials decided Friday not to attend the conference.

In questions following Gates's speech, attendees voiced both approval and suspicion. Some accused the United States of a double standard for failing to object to Israel's possession of nuclear weapons. Asked whether he thought Israel's nuclear arsenal posed a threat to the region, Gates initially gave a four-word answer: "No, I do not."

Another questioner asserted that the intelligence report had "totally destroyed" any unanimity of the international community to pressure and sanction Iran on the nuclear issue.

Gates urged Gulf nations to shift their focus from bilateral military ties with the United States toward multilateral cooperation to better counter Iran and other threats. Specifically, he called for a collective effort to develop regional air and missile defense systems, as well as a shared monitoring of waters in the region for terrorism, piracy, drug trafficking and smuggling.

On Iraq, Gates said President Bush's troop increase over the past year has helped quell violence and demonstrated an enduring U.S. commitment to stabilizing the country. But he said the decline in U.S. troop levels starting this month represents "risks and opportunities for the whole region."

Arab nations should back the Iraqi government, Gates said, because if Iraq fails as a state, the repercussions will be felt first and most profoundly in the Middle East.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/12/08/AR2007120800894.html>

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New York Times  
December 9, 2007

## **Gates Sees Iran As Still-Serious Threat**

By Thom Shanker

MANAMA, Bahrain, Dec. 8 — Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said Saturday that Iran is a grave threat to regional security even without nuclear weapons, and called on Tehran to account for American intelligence that describes its support for terrorism and instability around the world.

Just days after Iran claimed political victory after a new American intelligence assessment found that Tehran had frozen its nuclear weapons program, Mr. Gates said Iran could restart those efforts at any time and must come clean about its efforts to build a bomb.

In a speech to a conference on regional security here, Mr. Gates dismissed those who suggested that the United States had a double standard on nuclear arms in the Middle East and that a nuclear-armed Israel was the real danger. He said that, unlike Iran, Israel had never threatened to destroy a neighbor.

Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has made aggressive comments toward Israel, including a call in 2005 for Israel to be "wiped off the map."

Mr. Gates mocked Iran's praise of a new National Intelligence Estimate as a "watershed" — the first time Tehran has accepted the conclusions of American spy agencies. As the audience chuckled, Mr. Gates said Iran's approval of the American intelligence estimate required it to accept other assessments of its behavior.

"Since that government now acknowledges the quality of American intelligence assessments," Mr. Gates said, "I assume that it will also embrace as valid American intelligence assessments of its funding and training of militia groups in Iraq, its deployment of lethal weapons and technology to both Iraq and Afghanistan, its ongoing support of terrorist organizations like Hezbollah and Hamas that have murdered thousands of innocent civilians and its continued research and development of medium-range ballistic missiles that are not particularly cost-effective unless equipped with warheads carrying weapons of mass destruction."

The National Intelligence Estimate concluded that Iran had a secret nuclear arms program, but that it halted the effort in 2003. The response from Tehran was to describe the report as America's confession of a mistake.

The defense secretary has consistently said that diplomatic and economic pressure should be the first choice to halt Iranian nuclear ambitions, and that military action should remain a last resort. His statements are softer than those of President Bush, who as recently as October invoked images of World War III to warn of the Iranian threat.

But, as would be expected of a former director of central intelligence, Mr. Gates said Iran "cannot pick and choose" only the American intelligence it likes.

He said the estimate "is explicit that Iran is keeping its options open and could restart its nuclear weapons program at any time — I would add, if it has not done so already."

The speech captured the same tone of calibrated irony that Mr. Gates used in response to a caustic address delivered by President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia to a regional security conference in Munich in February. Yet Mr. Gates was blunt in his assessments of Iranian action to provoke violence and instability around the world.

"There can be little doubt that their destabilizing foreign policies are a threat to the interests of the United States, to the interests of every country in the Middle East, and to the interests of all countries within the range of the ballistic missiles Iran is developing," he said.

An Iranian delegation was invited to the conference, but organizers said no officials from Tehran were in attendance.

In comments to reassure Persian Gulf partners that may fear American isolationism after the Iraq war, Mr. Gates emphasized Washington's commitment to the region, and pressed for an area-wide missile defense system and increased cooperation on local waterways to counter terrorism, piracy, narcotics trafficking and smuggling. He encouraged Gulf nations to move beyond bilateral relations with the United States in countering Iran, and offered as fertile areas of cooperation "shared early warning, cooperative air and missile defense, and maritime security awareness." He urged allies to develop regional air and missile defense systems.

To underscore the importance of the regional dialogue, the American delegation to this year's conference, sponsored by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, included for the first time the defense secretary; Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Adm. William J. Fallon, the senior commander of American forces in the Middle East.

"The United States remains committed to defending its vital interests and those of its allies in Iraq and in the wider Middle East," Mr. Gates said.

During a lively question-and-answer period, Mr. Gates was pressed on whether the United States had a double standard in organizing the world community to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons but not working to disarm Israel.

"Israel is not training terrorists to subvert its neighbors, it has not shipped weapons to a place like Iraq to kill thousands of civilians, it has not threatened to destroy any of its neighbors, it is not trying to destabilize the government of Lebanon," Mr. Gates said.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/09/world/middleeast/09gates.html?\\_r=1&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/09/world/middleeast/09gates.html?_r=1&oref=slogin)

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Washington Times

December 9, 2007

Pg. 4

**Russia**

## **Ballistic Missile Is Test-Fired**

MOSCOW — Russia yesterday test-fired an intercontinental ballistic missile with new equipment able to pierce anti-missile shields, the state news agency RIA said, underscoring Moscow's determination to assert its military might.

The RS-12M Topol ballistic missile, called the SS-25 Sickle by NATO, was successfully launched at 5:43 p.m. from Kapustin Yar firing range in southern Russia, RIA said, citing a spokesman for rocket forces.

The spokesman said the test was part of a trial of unspecified new equipment that could pierce anti-missile shields.

The launch was conducted amid U.S. plans for a missile-defense shield in Europe, which Russian President Vladimir Putin has said would threaten Russian interests.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20071209/FOREIGN/112090028/1003/foreign>

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Los Angeles Times

December 9, 2007

## **U.S., Russia To Discuss Missile Defense Effort**

*Diplomats will meet in Budapest to talk about the system Bush wants to deploy in Europe to keep Iran in check. Moscow doesn't see it that way.*

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON — American and Russian diplomats plan to meet Thursday in Hungary to discuss cooperation on a missile defense system.

Leading the U.S. delegation in Budapest will be John C. Rood, secretary of State for arms control and international security. Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak will head the Russian contingent.

The United States will continue to discuss its ideas for cooperating with Russia on a missile defense system that President Bush wants to deploy in former Soviet satellite nations in Eastern Europe, according to a State Department announcement Saturday.

Russia's foreign minister accused the United States last week of backtracking on proposals for missile defense cooperation. Sergey Lavrov detailed Russian allegations that Washington had gone back on compromises reached when he met with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in October.

The United States has withdrawn a proposal for constant Russian monitoring of planned U.S. missile defense facilities in Poland and the Czech Republic, and has rejected the idea of jointly evaluating threats, he said. The administration says the installations in the two nations -- now NATO members -- would counter a looming Iranian threat. Moscow disputes Washington's contention and says that it believes the real aim is to weaken Russia. This week's meeting will be the fourth on the issue since Bush and Russian President Vladimir V. Putin held talks in Kennebunkport, Maine, in July.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/asection/la-na-missile9dec09,1,775314.story>

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Los Angeles Times

December 9, 2007

Pg. 1

## **CIA Has Recruited Iranians To Defect**

*The secret campaign was launched two years ago to undermine Tehran's nuclear program. It has persuaded a 'handful' of key officials to leave.*

By Greg Miller, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — The CIA launched a secret program in 2005 designed to degrade Iran's nuclear weapons program by persuading key officials to defect, an effort that has prompted a "handful" of significant departures, current and former U.S. intelligence officials familiar with the operation say.

The previously undisclosed program, which CIA officials dubbed "the Brain Drain," is part of a major intelligence push against Iran ordered by the White House two years ago.

Intelligence gathered as part of that campaign provided much of the basis for a U.S. report released last week that concluded the Islamic Republic had halted its nuclear weapons work in 2003. Officials declined to say how much of that intelligence could be attributed to the CIA program to recruit defectors.

Although the CIA effort on defections has been aimed in part at gaining information about Tehran's nuclear capabilities, its goal has been to undermine Iran's emerging capabilities by plucking key scientists, military officers and other personnel from its nuclear roster.

Encouraging scientists and military officers to defect has been a hallmark of CIA efforts against an array of targets since the height of the Cold War. But officials said those programs did not generally seek to degrade the target's capabilities, suggesting that U.S. officials believe Iran's nuclear know-how is still thin enough that it can be depleted.

The program has had limited success. Officials said that fewer than six well-placed Iranians have defected, and that none has been in a position to provide comprehensive information on Tehran's nuclear program.

The CIA effort reflects the urgency with which the U.S. government has sought to slow down Iran's nuclear advances, as well as the importance Washington attaches to finding human sources who can help fill intelligence gaps left by high-tech collection methods such as satellites and electronic eavesdropping equipment. The program was described by officials on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the effort.

The White House ordered the stepped-up effort in hopes of gathering stronger evidence that Tehran was making progress toward building a nuclear bomb. The Bush administration "wanted better information" on Iran's nuclear programs, said a U.S. official briefed on the expanded collection efforts.

"I can't imagine that they would have ever guessed that the information they got would show that the program was shut down," the official said.

That was the central finding of the comprehensive intelligence report released last week. The National Intelligence Estimate on Iran contradicted previous intelligence assessments and undercut assertions by the Bush administration. The new report, which represents the consensus view of all 16 U.S. intelligence agencies, also concluded that Tehran "at a minimum is keeping open the option to develop nuclear weapons" and continuing to pursue civilian nuclear energy technologies that could help it make a bomb.

A CIA spokesman declined to comment on the effort to cultivate defectors, saying "the agency does not comment on these kinds of allegations as a matter of course."

### **White House reversal**

The administration's decision to step up intelligence collection on Iran in 2005 was a reversal from a position the White House took after President Bush was first elected. Former CIA officials said that the agency had built up a large Iran Task Force, made up of nearly 100 officers and analysts at headquarters, by the end of the Clinton administration. But that office shrank to fewer than a dozen officers early in the Bush administration, when the White House ordered resources shifted to other targets.

"When Bush came in, they were totally disinterested in Iran," said a former CIA official who held a senior position at the time. "It went from being a main focus to everything being switched to Iraq."

Asked about decisions to reduce the size of the Iran Task Force, CIA spokesman Paul Gimigliano said: "Iran has been an issue of priority to the United States for a long time. You shouldn't assume that a single unit of any size reflects the complete level of effort. That would be a mistake."

Even as the task force shrank, officials said, other CIA units, including its counter-proliferation division, continued to track Iran's procurement networks and other targets.

Some of that reduced task force capacity has been restored, former CIA officials said. Two years ago, the agency created an Iran division within its overseas spying operations, applying to a single country resources and emphasis usually reserved for multinational regions.

The stepped-up effort went beyond the CIA, and has also involved the National Security Agency, which eavesdrops on other countries' communications, and the National Reconnaissance Office, which operates spy satellites.

The defector program was put in place under CIA Director Porter J. Goss, who has since left. The agency compiled a list of dozens of people to target as potential defectors based on a single criterion, according to a former official involved in the operation: "Who, if removed from the program, would have the biggest impact on slowing or stopping their progress?"

The rewards for defectors can be substantial, including relocation to another country and lifetime financial support. In the two years since it was launched, the program has led to carefully orchestrated extractions of a small group of Iranian officials who operated in the mid- to upper tiers of the Islamic Republic's nuclear programs.

None of those who defected was considered essential to the nuclear program, nor were they able to provide comprehensive descriptions of Iran's efforts, officials said.

"Did they have replacements for these people? Any country would have," the former official involved in the operation said. "But we did slow the program."

The identities of the defectors have been carefully protected. However, there was speculation this year of CIA involvement in the apparent defection of a former Iranian deputy defense minister, Ali Reza Asgari, who went missing in February during a visit to Turkey.

At the time, Iran's top police chief was quoted in the official news agency as saying that Asgari probably had been kidnapped by operatives working for Western intelligence services. Asgari was believed to have extensive knowledge of Iran's conventional weapons program as well as its ties to the militant Shiite Muslim group Hezbollah in Lebanon.

But Asgari was not thought to be involved in Iran's nuclear program, and the CIA, when pressed by congressional officials about the matter, adamantly denied involvement in the Iranian general's disappearance.

Officials declined to discuss the whereabouts of the defectors, or details regarding the methods used to approach them. The former senior U.S. intelligence official said that potential defectors had not been approached directly by the CIA, but through other contacts the agency has cultivated inside the country.

Often, the former official said, there are as many as "three degrees of separation" between agency personnel and those targeted for approach, and that each of those interim contacts had to be thoroughly vetted before a planned approach was approved. Those who have left Iran have been debriefed and relocated either by the CIA or with the help of allied intelligence services, the former official said.

The CIA program was implemented after significant debate between the White House and the agency over its size and scope, officials said. National Security Council officials urged the CIA to make the program as broad as possible, and to spread word through Iranian networks that the United States was prepared to help officials leave the country and relocate.

But CIA officials fought to keep the program narrowly targeted to avoid catching the attention of Iran's intelligence service. Even at that, CIA officials assumed that Iran's service was keeping close watch on key officials in the nuclear program, and that potential defectors could be decoys.

The "Brain Drain" program is among the latest in a long series of efforts to shore up U.S. intelligence on Iran. It was launched at a time when a presidential commission was preparing a scathing report on the inadequacies of U.S. intelligence on Iran and other nations suspected of having nuclear, chemical or biological weapons.

U.S. intelligence officials said the information that surfaced this summer prompting the reevaluation of Tehran's nuclear weapons program centered on intercepts of Iranian government officials' conversations and the seizure of a journal that contained notes documenting the country's decision to shut down its weapons research.

During a briefing with reporters last week, a senior U.S. intelligence official said that Iran was "the hardest intelligence target there is."

"I mean, by comparison, North Korea is an open and transparent society," the official said.

### **History of setbacks**

U.S. intelligence on Iran has been beset by setbacks stretching back more than two decades. The CIA has had no permanent presence in the country since the United States broke diplomatic ties with the country -- and removed embassy personnel, as well as CIA officials who operated under diplomatic cover -- after the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Afterward, the agency began recruiting sources in Europe and elsewhere, in cities where there are large populations of Iranian expatriates who travel to and from the country. But the effort has been marked by failures.

In 1989, Iran's intelligence services broke up a network of agents in the country that was being directed by a CIA station in Germany known as "Tefran," for Tehran-Frankfurt. When that station was shut down, much of the collection work was shifted to Los Angeles, where there is a large population of Iranian immigrants, many of whom visit their home country.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-usiran9dec09,1.7573825.story>

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Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

December 9, 2007

## Taming Iran

*The administration must be doing something right*

By Jack Kelly

Iran suspended its nuclear weapons program in 2003 and probably won't be able to build a bomb before 2015 if it does restart it, a new National Intelligence Estimate has concluded. That's very good news ... if it's true.

But that's a big if. The NIE is a SWAG (Scientific Wild-Assed Guess), not a statement of proven fact. It's a SWAG from an intelligence community whose predictive record about the Middle East has been poor. It's a SWAG that's challenged by Israeli intelligence, whose predictive history is much better. And it's a SWAG that is diametrically opposed to the last SWAG the intelligence community issued on Iran's nuclear program.

An intelligence community that had "high confidence" in a 2005 NIE that Iran was building a bomb and was resistant to international pressure now has "high confidence" that Iran stopped building it two years before that NIE was issued because of international pressure no one can remember being exerted at the time. Just four months ago, Dr. Thomas Fingar, deputy director of analysis for the Office of National Intelligence and one of the three principal authors of the NIE, told the House Armed Services Committee: "We assess that Tehran is determined to develop nuclear weapons -- despite its international obligations and international pressure."

Assuming no political shenanigans (which may be a faulty assumption), what could have caused so dramatic a turnaround in so short a time?

The answer may be Gen. Ali Rez Asgari of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps, who defected to the West in February. His debriefing, and analysis of any documents he brought with him, could be responsible for the profound change in the intelligence assessment of what's going on in Iran.

Their sources say the reversal was based on notes of deliberations of Iranian military officials obtained last summer, wrote New York Times reporters David Sanger and Steven Myers Thursday.

But what if the notes were disinformation planted to mislead us? It was uncorroborated statements which proved to be false from an Iraqi defector (Curveball) which were chiefly responsible for the intelligence community's apparently erroneous conclusions about Saddam's weapons of mass destruction.

The notes and deliberations were corroborated by other intelligence, including intercepted telephone conversations among Iranian officials, sources told The New York Times.

Vice President Dick Cheney, the administration's leading hawk on Iran, pronounced himself satisfied with the NIE. "I think they've done the best job they can with the intelligence that's available," he said in an interview Wednesday.

But the Israelis are skeptical. "The noise that was heard last night in Tehran, according to credible reports, was a hearty Persian laugh," wrote Amir Oren in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz the day after the NIE's conclusions were made public. "The document's eight pages ... enable the ayatollahs' nuclear and operations officials ... to reach this soothing conclusion: The Americans have no understanding of what is really happening in Iran's nuclear program." Israeli intelligence agrees that Iran did suspend its nuclear program for a time in 2003 but believes the mullahs subsequently restarted it and will have the bomb by the end of 2009.

Democrats, who try to fashion every international and domestic development into a club with which to beat President Bush, claim the NIE proves the administration's policy towards Iran has been wrong. But if the NIE is accurate, the opposite is the case -- which may explain Mr. Cheney's contentment with it.

The NIE said Iran's decision to suspend its nuclear weapons program was "primarily in response to increasing international scrutiny and pressure resulting from exposure of Iran's previously undeclared nuclear work."



The United Nations didn't impose sanctions on Iran until last year. Can you think of an event in 2003 that might have made the mullahs nervous?

Libya's Muammar Gaddafi, who abandoned his nuclear weapons program that year, can. He told then Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi: "I will do whatever the Americans want, because I saw what happened in Iraq, and I was afraid."

Philip Klein wrote in the American Spectator: "Critics of President Bush cannot simultaneously believe that the current NIE is accurate while continuing to assert that Bush's policies towards Iran have been disastrous. Anybody who takes the report at face value would have to conclude, conversely, that the administration's nonproliferation efforts have been a smashing success."

*Jack Kelly is a columnist for the Post-Gazette and The Blade of Toledo, Ohio.*

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/07343/840050-373.stm>

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Washington Post

December 9, 2007

Pg. B1

## What We Didn't Learn From The Hunt For Iraq's Phantom Arsenal

***The good news: We're not going to war with Iran. The bad news: We still don't know what they're thinking.***

By Arthur Keller

*Many Americans felt whiplash last week as they tried to work out what the U.S. government knows about Iran's nuclear ambitions. After months of war rumors, Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell released a report from the intelligence community concluding that Iran had halted its nuclear weapons program in 2003 -- even though a similar assessment in 2005 had warned that Iran was determined to get the bomb.*

*Confused? Arthur Keller feels your pain. The veteran CIA case officer worked for the Iraq Survey Group, the CIA-led body that headed up the unsuccessful search for Saddam Hussein's supposed weapons of mass destruction in 2003-04. In the midst of hard questions about how intelligence is gathered, used and abused, Keller's experiences make for a cautionary fable. How did we blow it so badly in Iraq, and how could we be blowing it in Iran? To Keller, the answer lies in the shadowy world of human-intelligence collection .*

The hunt for WMD in Iraq was a deeply disturbing experience. The Iraq Survey Group was based in the huge Baghdad airport military zone south of the city. I spent two stints there, one after the U.S. invasion in 2003, the second in 2004. As ground troops in the intelligence war, we saw a series of missteps firsthand.

When I arrived in Baghdad, I was given a list of Iraqis who had supposedly worked on WMD programs and was told to interview as many of them as possible as quickly as possible. Not the best approach. "I can do the job quickly or well, but not both," I told my new boss. It's one thing to churn blindly through a list of contacts, but success takes time. To find out what Saddam Hussein really had, we needed to build personal relationships with the Iraqi officials in his program -- the bread and butter of espionage. Surprising as it may sound, the CIA teaches that you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar: A source recruited by force will provide information only grudgingly, and he'll lie to you whenever he thinks he can, simply out of spite.

I knew that persuading someone involved in a banned WMD program to open up would take time. Interviewees had to believe that they would not go to prison, that their meetings with the CIA wouldn't get back to the insurgents and that being honest would not ruin their chances of getting jobs in the future. I decided to focus on a senior member of Iraq's Military Industrial Commission, a group of defense companies that had been involved in earlier Iraqi WMD programs. My meetings with this official consisted of a litany of complaints, but the CIA trains case officers to be relentlessly pleasant, even when it sticks in your craw. What annoyed me most was that he often had a point. "The Baath Party purge is a disaster," he'd tell me. "I know," I'd reply. "The disbanding of the Iraqi Army is a disaster." "I know." "We have no power, water or safety." "I know." And so on. It wasn't until the fourth meeting that real nuggets started coming. Still, I never paid him a dime. I think he just wanted to look a U.S. official in the eye and tell the truth about the mistakes the occupation government was making.

But Washington was not so patient. The political pressure from home was murderous. During a pre-invasion trip back to CIA headquarters, I listened to my boss describe the stress on Langley's WMD specialists: "Remember the movie 'Das Boot,' where the sub is so deep it's close to getting crushed from the pressure? That's HQ right now. We're going to hear some very weird stuff emanating from HQ because nobody under that kind of pressure thinks straight."

Many of the CIA officers sent to Iraq had no WMD or Iraq experience. I have since learned that CIA headquarters was ordered to supply a certain number of warm bodies, irrespective of their qualifications. Unfortunately, WMD expertise is years in the making, not something you can get from the back of a cereal box or even a few detailed briefing booklets.

Making everything worse, our security problems were legion. Traveling the airport road -- by far Iraq's most dangerous route -- into Baghdad was one hell of a commute. I was often greeted by the sight of columns of roiling, greasy black smoke, signs that a bomb had just gone off and, probably, that some American had just died a fiery death. I often wondered when it might be my turn.

To make matters worse, CIA officers were often sent to Baghdad (against official policy) without getting anti-ambush training. And the Iraq Survey Group was sometimes given armored vehicles that were ridiculously easy to identify, such as a canary-yellow armored Humvee that was a screaming invitation for an IED attack. During one particularly bad stretch in early 2004, the Iraq Survey Group lost an armored car for three weeks in a row to such attacks. The dearth of CIA fatalities was due far more to luck than to skill.

But for all these lapses, the CIA accomplished something of a mission impossible: proving a negative. In candid moments, most of the group's members had quietly acknowledged by late 2003 that Iraq had no banned weapons for us to find. But we kept searching for another year, until shortly after the November 2004 U.S. elections. Like a zombie, the group was kept alive long after it should have expired, seemingly because the only way to minimize the political damage of the truth was to let the White House announce, "Our teams are still looking for Hussein's arsenal." Given the perennial shortage of CIA case officers, the Bush administration's insistence on keeping the Iraq Survey Group open meant that other crucial work didn't get done. Someday, when an attack catches the CIA unawares, which politico will take responsibility for this dangerous diversion?

All of which brings us to the central question: What went so terribly wrong in Iraq, and could it happen again? The truth is that WMD programs -- Iraqi, Iranian or otherwise -- are very much alike. The scientists are allowed no contact with the outside world. Secret police monitor their phone calls and e-mails. In the trade, we call these "black" programs: They operate under a shroud of such secrecy that to outsiders they do not appear to exist. So recruiting spies inside any black program is a near impossibility. Even so, when it came to Iraq, the CIA's cupboard was extraordinarily bare. By the late 1990s, Iraqis had a powerful aversion to working with the CIA, largely because of past U.S. misfires: the Kurdish revolt that President Richard Nixon spurned in the 1970s, the Shiite and Kurdish uprisings after Operation Desert Storm that President George H.W. Bush abandoned, the feckless Clinton-era attempts to foment yet another Kurdish rebellion.

Americans were quick to forget our historical betrayals in Iraq, but our Iraqi victims did not. The few Iraqis we did reach before the 2003 invasion were usually far too wary to risk talking to the CIA. This cumulative failure lay at the heart of our WMD intelligence problems. (Not that outsiders understood that; critics assumed that the CIA should somehow have been able magically to penetrate the innermost circles of the Iraqi police state.)

Our newspapers and TV screens have been filled for months with rumblings about war with Iran. The bombs now seem less likely to start flying, but the problem of penetrating closed regimes and terrorist networks isn't going anywhere. Let's just say you were an Iranian nuclear physicist back in 2003, working on a bomb program that you believed was immoral. Now look at the decades-long debacle of U.S. policy in Iraq. Will all those who want to volunteer to spy for the CIA raise their hands? Anyone? Anyone?

*Arthur Keller is a former CIA case officer.*

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/12/07/AR2007120701619.html>

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Washington Times

December 10, 2007

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## **Nuclear Iran Seen Within Three Years**

JERUSALEM — Israel thinks that Iran will have the resources to create a nuclear weapon by 2010 despite a U.S. intelligence report that Tehran is not building an atomic bomb, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said yesterday. Mr. Olmert told his Cabinet that Iran was continuing to enrich uranium and develop ballistic missiles and that Israel would press the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency to "expose Iran's nuclear weapons activity." The prime minister noted that a U.S. National Intelligence Estimate last week said Iran's nuclear-weapons program was frozen in 2003, "but there is no explanation where it disappeared to," according to an official who was at the meeting.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20071210/FOREIGN/112100065/1003>

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New York Times  
December 11, 2007

## Israelis Brief Top U.S. Official On Iran

By Steven Erlanger

JERUSALEM, Dec. 10 — Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, made an unusual visit to Israel and got a polite earful on Monday about Israel's gloomy assessment of Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Israel thinks that an American intelligence assessment of Iran's nuclear weapons program, published in an unclassified version last week, is unduly optimistic and focuses too narrowly on the last stage of weapons development — fashioning a bomb from highly enriched uranium.

The National Intelligence Estimate, a consensus of 16 American spy agencies, says with “high confidence” that Iran stopped its nuclear weapons program in 2003 and with “moderate confidence” that the program had not resumed.

Israeli intelligence estimates say Iran stopped all its nuclear weapons activities for a time in 2003, nervous after the American invasion of Iraq, but then resumed those activities in 2005, accelerating enrichment and ballistic missile development and constructing a 40-megawatt heavy-water reactor in Arak that could produce plutonium.

Israel believes Iran continues to work, however limited by international pressure and economic and technical difficulties, on all phases of building a nuclear weapon. Iran denies ever having had a nuclear weapons program and says its nuclear program is focused on generating electricity.

In meetings on Monday with the Israeli defense minister, Ehud Barak, and Israeli intelligence officials, Admiral Mullen and his staff listened to concerns that Iran could produce a nuclear bomb, unless deterred, by the end of 2009 at the earliest or, more likely, sometime in 2010-11.

The Pentagon, focused on Iraq, is eager for a diplomatic solution with Iran. But the Pentagon has also emphasized that the intelligence estimate “made it clear that Iran did have a nuclear weapons program and that they are still enriching uranium,” said Capt. John Kirby, a spokesman for the admiral.

Captain Kirby called Monday's discussions “productive and candid,” and said they centered on regional challenges “and the shared recognition that there remains a potential for Iran to develop nuclear weapons and threaten its neighbors.”

Admiral Mullen, who has been chairman of the Joint Chiefs for only a few months, was making a 24-hour visit to Israel, rare despite close defense ties between the United States and Israel.

He was returning from a regional security conference in Bahrain, where the American defense secretary, Robert M. Gates, emphasized that Washington continued to see Iran as a grave threat to regional security. Mr. Gates said Iran had accelerated its efforts to enrich uranium despite United Nations Security Council sanctions and could restart a weapons program at any time.

Admiral Mullen was a guest of the Israeli chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, who held a dinner for him Sunday night.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/11/world/middleeast/11mullen.html?\\_r=1&ref=world&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/11/world/middleeast/11mullen.html?_r=1&ref=world&oref=slogin)

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Los Angeles Times  
December 11, 2007

## Mullen Reassures Israel On Iran

*The Joint Chiefs head tells Israeli defense officials that the U.S. still views Iran as a threat, despite a recent intelligence estimate*

By Peter Spiegel, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

TEL AVIV — The top U.S. military officer attempted to reassure Israeli defense leaders Monday that the United States still views Iran as a serious threat to the Jewish state, even as the Israelis disagree with an American intelligence finding that Tehran ceased its nuclear weapons program in 2003.

Adm. Michael G. Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, discussed the National Intelligence Estimate of Iran's nuclear program with Defense Minister Ehud Barak and the head of Israel's military in back-to-back meetings here, where the report has provoked widespread debate over American intentions.

Participants in the meetings said Israeli officials took issue with the U.S. view that the weapons program had stopped, saying Iran's continued enrichment of uranium was aimed at developing a nuclear bomb.

The U.S. assessment, issued last week, says the enrichment program has continued unabated, even as the weapons program was shut down. Iran has insisted that it is producing only low-grade uranium to drive civilian power plants, not highly enriched uranium for bombs.

Mullen said after the meetings that both Barak and Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, the new head of the Israeli defense staff, expressed a desire to work with the U.S. on analyzing American intelligence on the Iranian program.

Mullen said he expressed similar U.S. concerns about the enrichment program, calling it the "center of gravity" of the Iranian program that needs to be stopped with the help of international pressure.

He also reiterated American views that Iran continues to mislead nuclear regulators about the extent and intentions of its program.

"I wanted to reassure them that I still consider Iran a threat," Mullen said in an interview with The Times aboard his aircraft.

"Their hegemonic views, their regime's rhetoric, still speaking to the elimination of Israel, is all very disturbing to me. I intended to leave the impression with them that I wasn't taking my eye off the mark."

The timing of the intelligence estimate, coming in the midst of Bush administration efforts to garner international support for a third round of U.N. Security Council sanctions, has forced the White House to scramble to reassure allies such as Israel that it has not changed its view of the Iranian government and remains committed to eliminating its enrichment program.

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, during a weekend stop in Bahrain to address a group of Arab leaders, acknowledged that President Bush and his foreign policy aides felt frustration with the timing and content of the report, but noted that such decisions are made by intelligence professionals, not policymakers.

"The estimate clearly has come at an awkward time," Gates said. "It has annoyed a number of our good friends. It has confused a lot of people around the world in terms of what we're trying to accomplish."

Sunni Muslim-led states in the region have grown increasingly concerned about Shiite Muslim-dominated Iran's strengthening position in the Persian Gulf, fearing it is using chaos in Iraq to boost its influence.

Mullen returned to Washington on Monday night.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-mullen11dec11.1.952256.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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Washington Post  
December 11, 2007  
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## **New U.N. Iran Resolution Considered**

*Draft Measure Would Impose New Sanctions on Military Unit, Bank*

By Robin Wright, Washington Post Staff Writer

A draft U.N. resolution on Iran circulating among the world's major powers calls for new sanctions against the elite Quds Force and a top Iranian bank as well as "restraint" and "vigilance" on the supply, sale or transfer of arms to Iran, according to sources familiar with the proposal.

The draft, to be discussed today by political experts from the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany, recommends freezing the assets of entities and individuals suspected of engaging in nuclear proliferation and weapons delivery systems or violating two earlier Security Council sanctions resolutions, the sources said. It also calls for a travel ban -- prohibiting entry or transit in all U.N. member countries -- for many of the same people. The proposal specifically designates the Quds Force, the foreign operations branch of the Revolutionary Guard Corps, for exporting arms prohibited under previous resolutions and for proliferation activity. It is highly unusual for the world body to sanction a military wing of a member state, officials say. The proposed measure would freeze any of its assets abroad, make business dealings with it illegal and isolate it financially, they add.

The Quds Force numbers up to 15,000 and runs Tehran's foreign covert operations, including arms, aid and training for groups such as Hezbollah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Iraq's Shiite militias, U.S. and European officials say.

The draft of the long-delayed third U.N. sanctions resolution is still being negotiated, and early versions are often tougher than the final product. But its scope is significantly wider than the two previous resolutions, even though it does not go as far as the sweeping sanctions the United States unilaterally imposed in October against the 125,000-member Revolutionary Guard Corps, the Quds Force, and three banks, officials say.

Officials from several countries said the proposal indicates that there is still an appetite for significant new punitive measures against Iran even after the U.S. National Intelligence Estimate last week concluded that Tehran had halted its nuclear weapons program four years ago.

"The international community is not being dissuaded by the NIE and is not going to be led down a cul-de-sac because of the noise of the moment. It's still focused on one salient fact. Iran can't run about defying the international community," said a European diplomat. A senior official from a second European country said the intelligence assessment "might complicate things . . . but we do not intend to lessen the pressure."

The resolution is not based on whether Iran has an active nuclear weapons program -- an issue about which the five veto-wielding countries on the Security Council have disagreed. After meeting with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Friday at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told reporters that the NIE "fully confirms the information that we have: that there is no military element in their nuclear program" and added: "We hope very much that these negotiations with Iran will continue."

The European Union has spearheaded talks with Tehran on its nuclear programs and efforts to get it to cooperate with the international community now.

The new resolution instead focuses on Tehran's insistence that it will continue enriching uranium, a process that could in the future be subverted from a peaceful energy program to develop a bomb. Iran now has 3,000 functioning centrifuges, a major technical milestone, giving Tehran the capacity to produce tens of kilograms of low-enriched uranium each month.

On that issue, the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany do share deep concern, diplomats involved in the negotiations say.

"Iran is getting to a stage where they will have weapons-grade enriched uranium," said the European diplomat, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because negotiations are underway. "Iran is also still in breach of every resolution. Most of the allies -- although Russia and China are dragging their feet -- and a lot of the international community are trying to focus on this in a dispassionate way and say that they're not cooperating with the U.N. mandate."

Still, the draft does not go as far as the Bush administration wants. One compromise has already rolled back a U.S. proposal for a ban on the sale of all arms and military equipment to Iran, calling instead for "restraint and vigilance," which is not legally binding, on arms sales and transfers. Russia and China, which have Security Council vetoes, sell military goods to Iran.

The draft also limits punitive steps to only one of the three banks sanctioned by the United States. The current draft calls for sanctions against Bank Melli, one of Iran's largest banks, sources say.

Moscow and Beijing are likely to have the last word on the final draft, since they have long opposed squeezing Iran too hard. The United States is still hoping for a vote this month, although a senior U.S. official acknowledged that it could slip until after the new year.

Although European officials and Middle East experts agree that the new NIE effectively takes military options off the table, tensions remain high between Washington and Tehran. Iran lashed out at the Bush administration Sunday after Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said in Bahrain that Iran is trying "everywhere you turn . . . to foment instability and chaos," charging that its "destabilizing" policies are a threat to every Middle East country.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammad Ali Hosseini charged at a news conference that the United States is trying to undermine regional cooperation. As a result of the new U.S. national intelligence estimate, "the U.S. government is disgraced and its decisions will definitely be questioned by world opinion," Hosseini said.

On Saturday, Oil Minister Gholamhossein Nozari said Iran, the fourth-largest producer of crude oil, has stopped selling its oil in U.S. dollars. "The dollar is no longer a reliable currency," he said.

An International Atomic Energy Agency team is now in Iran for three days of talks that are expected to focus on questions about particles of weapons-grade enriched uranium found by the U.N. watchdog agency at Tehran's Technical University, the Reuters news agency reported.

Rice told a women's foreign policy forum yesterday that the talks, by conference call, would attempt to finalize the draft to put before the Security Council in the next few weeks.

"I have found that most states have found that we have the right strategy, and the key is still to get Iran to stop its enrichment and reprocessing so that we can begin negotiations to meet the legitimate need for civilian nuclear power," Rice said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/12/10/AR2007121000733.html>

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Agence France-Presse (AFP)

## **Pakistan warns of strong response to nukes grab**

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistan's military vowed a strong response to any international attempt to seize its atomic arsenal as the army successfully test-fired a nuclear-capable cruise missile on Tuesday.



The security of Pakistan's estimated 50 nuclear warheads has been under global scrutiny since President Pervez Musharraf imposed a state of emergency on November 3 citing Islamist violence and political turmoil.

But the chairman of Pakistan's joint chiefs of staff, General Tariq Majid, blasted reports by "vested and hostile elements in the international media" about the security of its nuclear weapons, an army statement said.

"Suggestions have been made that our assets could either be neutralised or taken away towards safer place to prevent them from falling into wrong hands," the statement quoted Majid as saying after witnessing the launch of the locally developed Babur (Hatf 7) cruise missile.

"We remain alert to such threats and are fully capable of handling these."

The statement added: "Though no responsible state in the world can contemplate such an impossible operation, yet if someone did create such a scenario he was confident that Pakistan would meet the challenge strongly."

"Pakistan's nuclear assets are very safe and secure, and the nation need not to worry on that account. There is a very strong security system in place, which can ward off all threats, internal as well as external."

Musharraf and caretaker Prime Minister Mohammedmian Soomro congratulated scientists and engineers involved in Tuesday's test launch "on this very important success", the statement said.

The statement said that the test of the 700-kilometre (440-mile) range Babur missile would "consolidate Pakistan's strategic capability and strengthen national security".

"The Babur, which has near stealth capabilities, is a low-flying, terrain-hugging missile with high manoeuvrability, pinpoint accuracy and radar-avoidance features," it said.

"The missile test is part of a continuous process of validating the design parameters set for this weapon system."

Pakistan previously tested the missile in March and again in July. It was first fired in 2005, when its range was only 500 kilometres.

Pakistan confirmed last month that the United States was helping it ensure the security of its atomic weapons and shrugged off reports of a secret programme with Washington as nothing new.

The foreign ministry said the strategic arms were safe and secure under a tight command-and-control structure run entirely by Pakistan, and angrily dismissed fears that they could fall into the wrong hands.

A New York Times report had earlier said Washington was helping ensure their security in a top-secret programme that has cost the United States almost 100 million dollars since 2001, even though Islamabad refuses to allow US inspectors into its nuclear sites.

Advances by Taliban militants in the country's northwestern regions bordering Afghanistan have fuelled fears abroad that hardliners could either threaten Pakistan's nuclear weapons or even stage a takeover.

<http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5gFHaQL8iRheASNb-BWV4v1WMe0Gw>

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